What is claimed is:

1. A method for responding to an intellectual property (IP) search comprising:

receiving a search query for IP;

identifying a plurality of IP documents responsive to the search query;

assigning a score to each document based on at least the citation information; and

organizing the documents based on the assigned scores.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the documents are hyperlinked pages from the world wide web.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the usage information for a document comprises usage information including the number of users who have visited the document.

4. The method of claim 3, wherein the usage information for a document comprises the change, over a period of time, in the number of users who have visited the document.

5. The method of claim 3, wherein the usage information for a document excludes certain predefined users.

6. The method of claim 3, wherein the usage information for a document is weighted based on the nature of user.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein the usage information for a document comprises the frequency with which the document has been visited.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein the usage information for a document comprises the change, over a period of time, in the frequency with which the document has been visited.

9. The method of claim 7, wherein the usage information for a document excludes certain predefined visits.

10. The method of claim 7, wherein the usage information for a document is weighted based on the nature of the visit.

11. The method of claim 1, wherein the usage information for a document comprises a combination of unique visitors to the document and a frequency with which the document has been visited.

12. The method of claim 1, wherein the usage information is stored at a server that provides access to the documents.

13. The method of claim 1, wherein the usage information is stored at a client that accesses the documents.

14. The method of claim 1, wherein the score assigned to a document is relative to the score assigned to other documents.

15. The method of claim 1, wherein the score assigned to a document is an absolute score.

16. The method of claim 1, wherein the usage information for a document comprises the number of unique visitors to the document.

20. The method of claim 16, further comprising organizing the documents based on the usage information and the search query.

21. The method of claim 16, wherein the documents contain link information.

22. The method of claim 21, further comprising organizing the documents based on the usage information and the link information.

23. The method of claim 1, further comprising organizing the documents based on usage statistics, the search query, and the link information.

24. The method of claim 1, wherein the usage information for a document is based on the usage information for the site to which the document belongs.

25. The method of claim 1, further comprising performing a network analysis on the documents.

26. The method of claim 1, further comprising

receiving as a query one or more keywords or assignees to be searched;

searching the query in Issued Patent or Published Application databases;

retrieving cited prior art patents for each patent found in search results;

updating the query by adding assignees from the cited prior art patents; and

running a second search using the updated query.

27. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

for each patent, creating spring relationship among patents based on number of citation of patent prior art; and

generating a spring mass diagram.

28. The method of claim 1, further comprising clusterizing patents according to word similarity.

29. The method of claim 1, further comprising generating a visualization of the patents for display on a screen or plotting on a large format plotter.

30. The method of claim 1, further comprising three-dimensionally visualizing the patents on a 3D display device.

31. The method of claim 1, further comprising allowing a user to review the search result and revise the query.

32. The method of claim 1, further comprising caching results from prior IP maps in a remote computer.

33. The method of claim 32, further comprising retrieving a cached IP map in response to a user request.

34. The method of claim 1, further comprising distributing a search over a plurality of client computers.

35. The method of claim 34, wherein one of the client computers is located behind a firewall, further comprising bypassing the firewall in sending distributed search results to a remote computer.

36. The method of claim 1, further comprising

storing a patent at one or more local computers; and

requesting the patent from one of the local computers in response to a request for the patent.

37. The method of claim 1, further comprising communicating with an IP user community.

38. The method of claim 1, further comprising generating search metadata by an independent agent using one of latent semantic indexing, Naïve Bayesian methods, decision trees, decision rules, regression modeling, the Perceptron method, the Rocchio method, using example-based methods, a support vector machine, classifier committees, or boosting.

39. The method of claim 1, further comprising generating a composite rating for a patent by category or by patent, using the generated search metadata.

40. The method of claim 1, further comprising the use of multiple search agents using different search methodologies, each using a different set of generated search metadata.